



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## TRANSPORTATION INSPECTIONS BRING VIOLATIONS, SUSPENSIONS

### *VISITS TO CHILD CARE AGENCIES HELP KEEP CHILDREN SAFE*

NASHVILLE—In the first two weeks of stepped up inspections at licensed child care agencies, the Department of Human Services found nearly one hundred transportation-related violations, ranging from no drug tests for van drivers to leaving children unattended on vans. So far, seven agencies have voluntarily suspended their license to transport children and 46 other agencies were “put on notice.” Human Services licensing staff made more than 250 visits to child care centers, group and family homes that offer transportation to children from June 14 through June 25.

The Tennessee Department of Human Services alerted providers last month that it was beginning its annual warm weather crackdown. Not only are licensing staff making unannounced visits to check van logs, but they are also reviewing the providers’ policies, procedures and written plans for transportation to ensure that they are properly following the rules and keeping children safe.

“Our intense monitoring efforts are paying off,” said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. “Finding and correcting problems *before* a child suffers serious harm or injury is what this program is all about.”

Violations were discovered across the state. At one center in Chattanooga, licensing staff found 13 children, including some infants and toddlers, not buckled into their seat belts. In Hawkins County, a group home provider left a 6 year-old child alone after 14 other children were taken to a gym for tumbling. The child sought help at a church across the street from the home. In Nashville, an agency that did not even have transportation privileges was found taking children on a field trip, and numerous violations were uncovered.

“We’re doing what we can with the resources we have,” said Lodge. “However the responsibility still falls on the operators to do the right thing.”

Since 1997, four Memphis children have lost their lives after being forgotten in hot child care vans. Extreme temperatures cause many health risks for children such as: sunburn, heatstroke, dehydration, brain damage, and even death.

If you witness a child left unattended in a child care vehicle, dial 911 for immediate assistance. For other transportation safety violations please call the Human Services Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261--that’s 1-800-GO2VAN1 (Go to the back of the van and check the children--it’s the number one priority). For more information on child care licensing, visit:

<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/childcare.htm>.

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